



Sir ELTON JOHN SIGNS £1M GRANT TO PROTECT AFRICAN BABIES

March 22, 2010-- Sir Elton John today announced from Cape Town, South Africa, the granting of a £984,000 award to **mothers2mothers (m2m)** to be used to help prevent hundreds of thousands of babies across Africa from contracting the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) through mother-to child transmission and assist mothers in staying healthy to care for their children.

The award, a multi-year grant from The Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), will enable **m2m** to work to develop effective programmes to support clinical efforts preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, across sub-Saharan Africa and develop a gold standard for delivering and monitoring these programmes.

Each year, an estimated 1.4 million women living with HIV become pregnant. Without effective medical intervention and education, up to 40% of these women will transmit HIV to their children, either during pregnancy or in the first years of the infant's life. Scientific advances and high-quality medical care have almost eradicated pediatric AIDS in resource rich countries. 91% of the global cases of mother-to-child transmission of HIV emanate from sub-Saharan Africa, where there are overwhelming systemic, societal and economic barriers to care. The grant from the EJAF will enable **m2m** to explore and roll out effective and affordable client interventions in over 600 health care facilities across Africa.

'I visited **mothers2mothers'** programme at Site B clinic in Khayelitsha a couple of years ago' comments Sir Elton, 'and was knocked out by how effective the Mentor Mother approach can be. We want an HIV-free generation in Africa and **m2m** is going to help us get there.'

m2m works in health care facilities partnering with doctors and nurses to meet the comprehensive needs of HIV-positive pregnant women and new mothers. The organisation recruits HIV-positive mothers after they deliver their babies and trains them to work as paid professional health care providers in the clinics and maternity wards where they once received medical care. These peer educators, called "**Mentor Mothers**", engage, educate and support HIV-positive pregnant women and new mothers, guiding them in measures to prevent HIV transmission to their babies and in steps to ensure they will remain healthy to raise their children. These efforts contribute to empowering women and reducing stigma by teaching people to "live positively" with HIV.

Dr. Mitch Besser, Founder and Medical Director, and Gene Falk, Co-founder and President of mothers2mothers commented: "We are overwhelmed by the incredible generosity of the Elton John AIDS Foundation. This grant comes at a pivotal time in **mothers2mothers'** growth as we strive to provide more care to more mothers and babies, ensuring that they receive, understand and embrace all of the medical services that contribute to healthy HIV-free children and healthy mothers. This grant will be transformational for our organization's ability to measure the impact of our efforts and ensure we are providing the most effective services to our families. We are thrilled to be part of this strategic partnership with EJAF."



Since 2001, **m2m** has grown from a local program in the townships of Cape Town, South Africa, to a multinational organization that employs and empowers more than 1600 women living with HIV in more than 600 health care facilities in seven African countries. In 2009, mothers2mothers enrolled nearly 300,000 pregnant women and new mothers living with HIV into its programme.

Since its establishment in 1992 by founder and Chairman Sir Elton John, EJAF has raised over \$175 million to support HIV/AIDS prevention and service programs in 55 countries around the globe. EJAF focuses on supporting community-based HIV/AIDS prevention education programs, harm reduction programs, and direct services to persons living with HIV/AIDS, especially populations with special needs. Direct services include HIV/AIDS-related physical and mental health services, HIV testing and counseling, street outreach and education, assisted living services, social service coordination, community volunteer recruitment and support, health literacy, treatment access, and advocacy.

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About EJAF

Since its establishment in 1992 by founder and Chairman Sir Elton John, EJAF has raised over \$175m to support HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes in 55 countries around the globe. EJAF focuses on supporting community based, direct care services to people living with HIV/AIDS and those highly vulnerable to the disease. This includes HIV counseling and testing, medical treatment access, food security, shelter, psychosocial services, harm reduction, legal aid, and condom distribution.

For more information on the work of the Foundation visit www.ejaf.com or contact:

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For more information on the work of m2m visit www.m2m.org or contact:

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